



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Steven Lederer - Director of Public Works
Public Works
REPORT BY: Steven Lederer, Director, Public Works - 259-8228
SUBJECT: Fire Sirens Presentation and Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Public Works requests the Board to hear and provide staff direction on a proposal by Illumination Technologies to install 32, approximately 50 foot tall, monopoles for sirens and telecommunications equipment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Board's May 19, 2020 meeting, Illumination Technologies and its CEO Chris Canning provided a presentation to the Board on their potential proposal to install 32 monopoles, each approximately 60 foot tall, at various locations in the County's right-of-way, on each of which would be mounted a fire siren and telecommunications equipment. The poles will be substantially similar to the poles already installed on Rosedale Road and Petrified Forest Road (pictures and schematic drawings are attached). Following the presentation, the Board requested a more detailed analysis and recommendation from staff on the "Pros and Cons" of such a proposal, and of our current ordinances, processes, and procedures for handling a typical encroachment permit application for these types of units in the ROW, and that staff return to seek direction from the Board as to next steps.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Staff Report.
2. Presentation of any subsequent information by Illumination Technologies.
3. Public comments.
4. Discussion, questions, and possible direction to staff.

FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?

No

County Strategic Plan pillar addressed: Effective and Open Government

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There is no Environmental Impact for this item, but if the Board directs moving forward with siren installation, CEQA analysis will be required as part of that process.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

See attached report (Attachment A) for a complete staff analysis of this proposal. For ease of review, Sections 1 (Description of the Project) and 8 (Considerations and Recommendations) are copied and inserted below.

Section 1: Description of the Project

An unsolicited project was proposed informally by Illumination Technologies California (ITC) to, if approved, install approximately 32 Monopoles, mostly in the county's road right of way (ROW). Poles are also proposed in or near the Caltrans ROW, on the property of "others" (such as CalFire), and it appears one would be placed in the Yountville Roads Yard. These roughly 60 foot tall structures would contain a fire siren at the top, and be available for cellular communication companies ("users") to install their equipment on. A schematic drawing of the poles and pictures of existing poles (one on Rosedale Road and one on Petrified Forest Road) are included as Attachment A. The poles also include underground lines for fiber and to connect to the nearest power source (generally a PG&E power pole). The sirens have a solar/battery backup feature in the event of a loss of power. Some telecom users may also propose a backup power generator for their equipment.

The towers will be "disguised" as trees, using a pine, cedar, or cypress treelike covering (see pictures of existing poles). The total cost of construction of the 32 towers is estimated (by the proponent) to be between \$4.6 and \$5.2 million, though no funding is being sought from the County. The project proponents indicate that the poles are expected to attract "4G" cellular technology (their radio frequency analysis was done to enhance/expand 4G coverage) and that they are too far away from each other to accommodate 5G, but as the poles will be in place for a long time (potentially decades) there is no way to accurately predict future technology uses of the poles.

The proposal has been brought forth by Illumination Technologies California (ITC). ITC is represented by Chris Canning, who is both the CEO of the Company and the Mayor of Calistoga.

Mr. Canning has stated he is presenting purely in his private role and that this proposal is in no way connected to his role as Mayor or to the City of Calistoga. ITC considers themselves as a "Passive Infrastructure Provider", meaning that they own the poles, but lease out space to the actual wireless companies. Multiple carriers would be allowed to lease space on their poles.

The fire siren aspect of the proposal would create, at no cost to the county, a system of 32 poles, each with a loud siren at the top. The sirens would be manually activated, presumably by the County OES Manager using a pre-agreed protocol and set of standards (local standards yet to be created, though some exist in other places). The educational messaging to residents and visitors would be that the siren means "something is happening, you need to tune in for further information". As such, the siren is an alert, not a call to a specific action. It would work in conjunction with other notification systems, such as Nixle, official social media, on the ground direction from public safety officials, etc. The poles could potentially also be equipped with high technology fire sensing equipment, which could automatically warn officials in the early stage of a fire outbreak before other indicators would normally have detected a problem. ITC has indicated they might be able/willing to fund such a system depending on the success of this initial program. See Section 3 below for more details on the OES analysis of this proposal.

ITC provided a map of the potential tower locations in their presentation to the Board in May (Attachment B), but this map is difficult to read. As such I prepared a 1 page spreadsheet of locations (Attachment C) to assist the Board and public. ITC also provided reports with more information and pictures of each site. As this information is well over 200 pages long, staff has created a link (<https://www.countyofnapa.org/2956/Fire-Sirens-Cell-Tower-Board-Report-Docs>) to allow easy public access to the information. The sites are not exact as they have not yet been analyzed by any county department, but they do provide a general idea of what is intended. Some sites (such as the one near the Fire Station at Big Tree Rd.), and those that may not actually be in the County right of way (ROW) are seemingly problematic.

Section 8: Considerations and Recommendation

The above analysis provides a discussion of the pros and cons of accepting the ITC offer as we currently understand it. In summary:

1. Although there will be costs and challenges in implementation, OES supports moving forward with negotiations with ITC, and through the agreement try to maximize the fire siren and telecommunications coverage areas in remote areas of the County.
2. The Broadband/Telecommunications Group similarly supports negotiations to improve coverage areas around the County.
3. The Napa County Fire Chief, while specifically commenting that there are many challenges to overcome and that this system is not a Fire Department function, does not

object to moving forward.

4. Public Works, while we have questions about many of the proposed locations, is capable of working out safe locations for the poles via the encroachment permit process.
5. If the Board is supportive of the fire siren proposal, and since we have little discretion (essentially only over minor movement in location and which style of pole to use) over telecom facilities, staff recommends maintaining the existing administrative process for approving the monopoles.
6. From County Counsel, the Board is within their rights to reject the fire siren system but has little authority to prevent installation of telecom infrastructure. For telecom infrastructure we are not authorized to collect fees beyond our basic permit charges, but can minimally modify aesthetics and location. We are not authorized to consider the health effects of radio frequency waves.

One item not analyzed, as it is ultimately a policy decision, is the overall visual effect of the poles themselves. Some public commenters have suggested the County reject the fire siren system to minimize the amount of manmade infrastructure installed in the County.

Should the Board be interested in moving forward, staff recommends:

1. Direct staff to move forward with contract negotiations with ITC;
2. Appoint a 2 person Board committee to work with staff during the negotiations;
3. Direct OES to draft an outline of proposed operations; obtain approval from municipalities, and develop a cost estimate to the County for short term and long term operations; and,
4. Report back to the Board at the conclusion of negotiations for further direction or approval.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Fire Siren Board Report
- B . Schematic and Photos
- C . ITC PowerPoint Presentation
- D . Fire Siren List
- E . Telecom Priority Areas Map

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Susan Kuss